12: Glubb G-3 (1930-1946) 1948 MG1 Jordan
BEDOUINS MJ4

migrated from Central Arabia. Before Ibn Hadhdhal, the greatest shaikh in the Syrian desert had been Ibn Jesham, who now lives in poverty on the Lower Euphrates.

It was, indeed, related that an Arab petitioner had once accosted His Majesty King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud by the title of Chief of the Arabs, but that the latter had protested: "I take refuge with God, my son! The Chief of the Arabs is Ibn Hadhdhal." With less than 200 years of rule to their credit, the Sauds were a new family to the Arabs.

When this story was repeated to Ibn Hadhdhal, he interrupted the narrator to object: "I take refuge with God, my son!" said the old chieftain. "The chief of the Arabs is Ibn Jesham." Such was the modest chivalry of these old chiefs, although all of them were at war with one another.

From Ibn Hadhdhal I obtained a letter to Al Nuri ibn Shaalan, chief of the Ruwallah. A retainer of Fahad's, Burjas al Dhafiri, was detailed to accompany us on our journey, to save us from molestation by the Amarat. He could not, of course, protect us from raiders from other tribes. Burjas came from the Dhafir tribe, not the Amarat. He had been obliged to flee from his relatives owing to a blood feud, and had taken refuge with Ibn Hadhdhal, whose trusted retainer he had become. Burjas was so short-sighted that he was almost blind, but he knew the desert perfectly for hundreds of miles. As we rode along, he would cross-question us as to what we could see. "To the north-west, there should soon appear two low round hills each surmounted by a heap of stones, like a woman's breasts." "Can you see on the south a tall grey peak? It is Feridat al Wa'ar."

Burjas, half-blind, carried 200,000 square miles of desert in his mind's eye, and could estimate when every distant landmark would come into view.

We made for the water-holes at Al Molussi, in the hope of hearing news of Ibn Shaalan. The water-holes were in a narrow valley at the foot of a rocky cliff. There was nobody camped on the water. We stopped to drink, when suddenly we were startled by a voice calling: "What are you, O camel riders?"

High above us on the rocky cliff face sat three men, each holding a rifle. Burjas argued with them without revealing our identity,